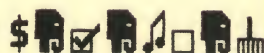


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INDIANA JONES AND THE 1200XL

By Frank Fellheimer (6KAUG)
Via the Michigan Atari Magazine
July/Aug 1988
With our Thanks, STATUS Editor

I am the owner of not just one 1200XL, but count them, three. Maybe you'd like to sell me the Brooklyn Bridge, but be sure that I am no fool. I bought my 1200XL's because I really like a number of features not available on the newer 800XL/XE or even on the older 800s.

After three years of ribbing on my system, I undertook several projects to get my system up to snuff with others...it's even better now.

For years I felt like Indiana Jones trying to locate and keep a precious jewel. You know the troubles he had! My trip is over because I finally got back home with all the goodies. Let's recap some of the problems of the 1200XL.

1. 64k RAM only: No expansion possible.
2. No 5vdc for interfaces & Modems.
3. XL Operating system only
4. Loss of Luminance control on high end of color ranges.
5. Text resolutions not as good as 800XL.

Have you had any of these problems? I have, for sure, and every one laughed at me because I still wanted to use this "beast" of a machine. Why? Let me

tell you. It's still the only 8bit computer ATARI has with four function keys. They control the cursor with only one key stroke and are redefinable. The Start/Select/Option buttons are out of the way so you don't hit them by mistake. It has a wide Return key, a wide Control key, two quadruple-wide Shift keys and wide Caps key. The keyboard itself is probably the best responding, simplest operating and maintaining, and well-built keyboard I have seen.

"That's just wonderful," you say, "and how about the problems?" OK, here we go. I have an ICD 256k RAM expansion board; it works really great. Newell also has one for the 1200XL. The 5vdc can be returned to your serial port simply by jumpering out R-63 (current limiting resistor) inside the unit.

Once that is done, you can buy any standard interface or peripheral without need of an external power supply. Since the 1200XL doesn't have a built-in operating system, there is no need to hold Option to boot Machine Language programs ...if it's BASIC, you can still slip in any cartridge you want.

Another new development is, I was able to obtain a dual operating system for my 1200XL. Fred Farleigh of Battle Creek makes the "FOS" for the 1200XL. It allows me to switch between the 1200XL operating system and the old 800 operating system...now I can use all the programs available for the Atari since I got mine in 1982. I love it!

How about the luminance control? That can be cured by jumpering

capacitor #C115. Lastly, text resolution can be improved by snipping off one end of capacitor #C60. It's enough improvement it can be noticed.

I hope this little article has helped you 1200XL owners. Look me up at the 6KAUG (GREATER KALAMAZOO ATARI USERS GROUP) BBS (616)657-2665.

THE BOX PROJECT

by George Hoffman, (The Captain)
Project by David Bunch & George Hoffman

There comes a time in every 8-BIT computer enthusiast's career when it is said, "Wouldn't it be nice 'if'....." This project hopes to supply an answer for some of these 'ifs'.

Some of these ideas were ours alone and some had their basis in Analog Magazine, under the 'Bits and Pieces Dept.', by Lee Brilliant. They have been modified to make them a little more user friendly than the original project outlined in the various articles. All of these boxes plug into the joystick ports or serial port and require no modification to the computer. The software for each box will be carried on STATUS RBBS, 804-395-3905, in the 8-bit library, under applications and listed as "CLOCKn", "VOICEn", etc.

Here is what we have to offer.

THE DAISY BOX

A box with four 13 pin serial sockets in it, with or without a 13 pin serial cable attached. When a device is disconnected from the system, you no longer have to worry whether the daisy chain is broken. The DAISY BOX requires no power.

THE CLOCK BOX

A box that plugs into joystick ports 1&2 or 3&4. Once it is set with the correct data, it keeps the time, date and day of the week, whether it is plugged into the computer or not. When it is plugged in and the computer is on, it draws its power from the machine, otherwise it uses an internal source for power. We estimate the internal source will drive the clock for a week without a recharge from the computer, which only takes seconds to accomplish. In addition, the box has a 1/8" (3.5mm) jack in the side for a 3 volt DC supply, (2 AA batteries) which will allow the clock to run as long as the supply lasts (approximately 1 yr). Both the internal backup and the 3 volt DC supplies are isolated from the computer and are not used if plugged in and the computer is on. The software that reads the data is in basic (just a few lines) to be included in your basic programs and in ML if you wish it to remain resident from bootup. Future plans call for a patch, to various DOS's, to be supplied that will time/date stamp files as they are saved.

THE VOICE BOX

A box that plugs into joystick ports 1&2 or 3&4 and allows the computer to speak words that you program it to say, using a text to voice editor. The voice can be output to an external preamp and speaker or to the TV/Monitor speaker. This box could be used in conjunction with the CLOCK BOX to vocalize the time when requested. Another use could be to vocalize the text on a screen for childrens educational programs. An example would be a flash card program. If there is sufficient interest, a vocal dictionary will be maintained and listed on the STATUS RBBS. The VOICE BOX is powered by the computer.

THE SLAVE BOX

This box connects two computers via the 13 pin serial ports and allows you to use your extra 400/800/XL/XE as a programmable slave computer. This slave machine can in turn be connected to the printer via the joystick ports using 8 bit parallel transfer. This would make the slave computer a 47k printer buffer and it would store about 20 pages of text, freeing up your main machine for other purposes while the slave prints out the buffer. In theory it is possible to use the same box in any number of configurations. Some examples would be a modem buffer or an extra computer running a security program and reporting back to the master machine. These are all software programmable options and are presently in the works. The SLAVE BOX is powered by the computer.

CABLES

Finally, we have 13 pin serial cables available in lengths of 1, 3 and 6 feet. Six and nine wire joystick cables are available, on request.

All of these BOXes work on the 400/800/XL and XE machines, as is. If an XL or XE is used as the slave, the SLAVE BOX requires some additional software and cable changes to work properly, in addition the extra ram is available for use. This is presently in development and may be available by the time of this printing.

Prices:

13 pin cables:

1 foot \$3.95

3 foot \$5.95

6 foot \$7.95 With audio input, add 1.25

Daisy Box:

w/1 foot cable \$18.95

w/3 foot cable \$21.95

w/6 foot cable \$24.95

Clock Box: \$29.95

Ext. power supply \$2.15

Voice Box: \$39.95

Ext. output Pre-amp/speaker \$12.50

6 foot audio cable \$2.40

TV output- see Cable list

Slave Box:

with 3' cables \$20.95

with 6' cables \$26.95

slave/printer 8 bit interface cable \$14.95

40k 400's- \$59.95

40k 800's \$79.95

Please direct all inquiries to THE BOX

PROJECT, P.O. Box 331, Portsmouth, Va.,
23705, Phone 804-483-1370. STATUS RBBS
Phone# 804-495-3905

WANDERER

3-D ACTION GAME
PYRAMIDE (French)

Computers: 520, 1040ST Color monitor.
Joystick required.

Reviewed by Bruce Finkelstein

While wandering (no pun intended) through the local software/electronics boutique, some marked down ST software caught my eye. I had not purchased entertainment software (read that GAMES) in quite a while and was intrigued by the colorful plastic box with a space battle scene on it. The blurb on the back touted it as "a game in space and at least three dimensions". The price was right and I was curious about 3-D programs.

When I opened the package I found the program disk, a 4x6 instruction pamphlet, and two pairs of cardboard red and blue glasses.

The 3-D effect is not the high tech supplied by "Stereotek" glasses but the same two colored glasses used in movie theaters in the fifties. The graphics are drawn in two colors, offset in order to produce the 3 dimensional effect through the bicolor glasses. There is a good explanation of the 3-D, and some suggestions for

improved viewing in the instruction book.

I booted the program, and after getting used to the 3-D effect, played for a while. After not getting too far in the game I decided to read the instructions.

The premise of the game is familiar, collect points (in this case, cats), advance in rank, and defeat the final enemy. The venue is very familiar to those of us who started computing on Atari 800's. The game is remarkably like the classic, Star Raiders. It is played going from sector to sector, destroying enemy ships along the way. During the combat phase you are presented with a "view screen" and two radar displays showing relative bearing from above and behind positions. You start with a number of shields, energy, and two poker cards. The interesting departure from the usual "zap the aliens" scenario is the game within the game. The planets hold poker hands, and you act as a courier, trading cards for cats. The amount received for the cards you trade is dependent on how much the hand held is improved. This introduces an element of strategy, as it is important to plan your travels to maximize profit, and minimize energy expenditure.

There are other means of advancing to the final confrontation including collecting jokers from the black holes and assembling 5 aces. You can save and resume up to 10 games should you wish to complete a game at a later time.

This game is by no means easy, and is more of a novelty than an addiction. If you are curious about 3-D and would like to add one to your game collection, this program might be what you're looking for. If you are looking for an addictive arcade style game that you can play for days, you might have to look elsewhere.

TELÉ-ETIQUETTE

A Personal Primer for Milder Modem Manners

By Bob Womack for STATUS

OK, OK. I know some of you have been telecommunicating for years. You've called BBS's all over these United States. You may have every possible kind of log-on sequence memorized so you can interpret within milliseconds the initial transmission from any computer (which usually looks like random ATASCII hash to the rest of us). You've even been called BACK and madly bleeped at by a No-Change (IBM) BBS. So you've really got the technical stuff DOWN. Just about any personnel manager would say, "Great! You've got half the job worked out. How about the other half: the interpersonal one?"

Good question. Why? Because telecommunication doesn't consist of computers talking to each other, it's people communicating to each other using the computer environment as a MEDIUM. And communication between humans can be a pretty complex process. Think about it. In person, you can hear

the words a person speaks, see his body language, and read the feelings in his face. Even on voice telephone, you not only hear his words, but HOW he says them. When you are communicating by computer and modem, all you have to carry your meaning are the characters you type and the manner in which you type them.

You have two "audiences" to speak to on a BBS: your fellow BBS users and the equipment operators (usually System operators or "SysOps"). Let's look at how you can best communicate to each of these.

First, the other users: The most direct impact you have on them is through the messages you leave on message bases. When you leave a message, your choice of words, the form of your messages, and the manner of your replies to other's messages, all communicate something about yourself to those watching. At the most shallow end of the issue, taking the time to organize your letter will communicate something of your personal organization. For example, when you post a message on a new subject, come up with an interesting and informative title for your message. I've been on boards where the original message title from last year ("Yea, a new message base!") still adorned every message because no-one would take the time to POST a message instead of REPLY to an existing one. The "Title Scan" function was worthless on this board for the obvious reason that every title was the same.

Another example, If the board you are on doesn't have a "Read Threads" feature (which allows you to read exchanges of messages and replies while skipping unrelated messages), a good practice is to state at the top of your replies, the message number or topic you are replying to so others know what you are referring to. Also, remember that those who read your message can't see your face, hear your voice, or see that charming twinkle in your eye. A positive reply can appear negative without the context of a human face and voice. Your punctuation and the quips and asides you add in parenthesis can really let people in on what's going on inside your head.

On the other hand, if you see a message that provokes you or offends you, don't immediately reply to it. Instead, re-read it. Does it really say what you thought it said? If it doesn't, you've just saved yourself the embarrassment of going off half-cocked. If it does, think about WHY it offends you. Is it the content of the message or the way the author stated it which provoked you? If a message REALLY offends you or insults you, hold your fire. Copy the message to your buffer or printer and go offline. Show it to a cool-headed friend. Mull it over. Sleep on it. Talk to the bulletin board's SysOp about it or leave him feedback. When you decide to reply, remember one thing: The person you are replying to isn't on trial in your message, YOU are. If you keep your cool and apply the golden rule (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you), you'll probably communicate more and better things

about yourself and the particular slant you bring to a discussion than if you simply react on the same level as the person who provoked or insulted you.

And now to those funny creatures who either have no discernable personality at all or who totally dominate their board, the SysOps. But maybe we should first look at all of those who own a phone number listed as a BBS number. When you make your first call to a BBS, who or what answers the phone? A computer, you hope. If not, someone's going to get his ear cooked by a high-pitched carrier tone from your computer. Two good rules of thumb: A) Make your first call to a BBS during normal humanoid waking hours. B) make your first call to a particular BBS with a voice telephone. If you follow the second suggestion, your chances of drilling someone's ear are greatly reduced. If you follow the first one, you may never have the shocking experience (as I did once with my trusty direct-connect XMS01 modem) of hearing your computer say "Uh, hello?" (at 2 am in a darkened home this is SCARY), and then an unprintable string of invocations as your modem reams his ear out. Back to the SysOp. This is the person who determines the complexion of the BBS and often spends his own time and money (and ties up his equipment) to provide the users with the services offered by his BBS. What does he get in exchange for his time (or money)? Nothing, unless YOU, the user, give it to him. What can you give him (it's hard to stuff a dollar tip down a telephone line)? How about a thank-you note for just keeping the board going in his morning feedback? Otherwise, and

usually, an average communique' from a user can look something like, "Hey! Didn't we have MPP EXPRESS up on this board? Where the heck is it? Call me immediately!", which is fine if you are a friend of the SysOp or you're his boss. Otherwise, it can come across as, "So, like, get to work! Okay? What's wrong with you anyway?". Also, note the absence of a return phone number in the above example... It's a nice idea to establish a relationship with ANYONE before you ask him for a favor. If you like the SysOp's board, tell him every once in a while, before you run into a situation where you need to ask him to do what may add up to forty-five minutes of file transfer added to his usual daily BBS maintenance on the spur of the moment. No big deal. Most SysOps wouldn't be in the job if they were searching for kudos. What most of them want is to know that all the work has helped or entertained someone.

So there you have it. Most of it is common sense, but then again, common sense is usually acquired at the expense of mistakes. Ours, or other peoples. Here's a chance to learn from MY mistakes (Hehehe).

LIBRARY NEWS

DON MARSHALL

As the Status 8 bit librarian I don't get as many calls as does Bob Momack the Sysop, but I have gotten a call or two about how to run programs that we sell from the club library.

First let me say that I have not used each of the programs in the library, but I am working on getting familiar with them a little more each week. I may not know the answer to your question, but I will try to find the answer and get back to you.

This installment is a quick review of the program Cute Labels. This is, of course, a program designed to make labels on your printer. It works well with labels that are 3-1/2" by 15/16", but the program does allow for adjustment to the size of label that you have.

The first phone call I ever received was about this program and the Genealogy disk. I will try to review the other disk next time. The question about the Cute Labels disk was "How do I get it to run?". At first I was puzzled when I tried to run the disk I got nothing but boot errors. This normally means that there is a problem with the DOS on the disk. I looked at the library list and it told me that the disk had DOS.SYS and DUP.SYS so I knew that the DOS menu should have come up without the disk error. I turned the disk over and tried to boot the DOS, it worked, but that side of the disk only has fonts (character sets used to print different styles of print) and a couple of graphic icons (pictures from print shop). I turned the disk over and looked at the directory. I found that side of the disk did not have DOS.SYS nor DUP.SYS at all. The DOS menu looked a little different, when I looked closer it said that it was for the Atari 800. The disk was formatted

in single density and made so it would run on an 800 with an 810 disk drive. So it couldn't be formatted with extended or double density. The problem was that there wasn't enough room on that side of the disk to have DOS too. If you own a 1050 disk drive and you get this disk, I suggest that you get a blank disk and format it with DOS 2.5 in extended mode (option I from the menu), then write DOS files to the blank disk. Then copy the club disk over so you will have DOS on the disk.

Running cute labels is easy. Cute labels has an "OBJ" extender which means that it is a binary load or Object file. When you want to load this program you must remove the basic from your machine. Atari 800 users remove the basic cartridge. Atari XL/XE users hold OPTION down when turning on the power. When the DOS menu comes up, press L for load and then type in the program name CUTE LABEL.OBJ (or use the wildcard CUT*.*).

The first screen will show you a fancy printed title page and then the program asks you for the size/printer options you want. Read the screen and answer for your setup. After this, the program menu comes up and you can figure it out from there. The program is very nice, it gives the ability to use two different fonts on the same label (standard or user loaded) as well as icon pictures on either or both sides of the data. The program even lets you see the print style on the screen before you print it out. I have used other label programs, but they often need to be adjusted so that after

about 3 labels you don't print in-between the labels. This program worked for at least 20 labels without having to be re-aligned.

I was very impressed with this program. It is public domain and from the library it only costs \$2. The disk has some other utilities on it that will allow you to convert print shop icons so that any print shop icons you have can be used. The documentation is also on the disk.

If you have a request for a review of another program from the library, just let me know and I will give it a shot. Don't forget, with the present non-availability of new programs for the 8 bit, you still have a lot to choose from, in the club library.

MICROSOFT WRITE

By Bill Maddrey
STATUS Western Liaison

An overview of Microsoft Write - a full-featured, GEM oriented Word Processor for the Atari ST and Mega Computers.

In my few years of being around computers, I have used only a few word processing programs: Atariwriter, Atariwriter +, ST Writer, First Word (PD version), and now Microsoft Write. None has been as expensive as Write, in fact the other two I have used for the ST were both "gimme programs" supplied with my ST when I bought it.

Recently, I had need for some additional power for processing large numbers of letters in a serious job search campaign. Since March 1, I have mailed over 200 letters to prospective employers, close friends, and employment recruiters. Without the use of a word processor, this task would have been extremely difficult and time consuming, especially when one thinks of all that typing on a conventional typewriter!

I made the serious mistake of waiting until I needed the program to go out and buy the thing. I should have purchased such a program a month or more before the need arose so that I could become more proficient with the "bells and whistles" associated with Microsoft Write. But that's what we call "hindsight" isn't it?

In any case, I bought Write over the commercial version of First Word and Word Perfect for several reasons. First the cost of Word Perfect was far more than I had wanted to spend and it has some features which, likely, only novelists or textbook writers would use; for example, indexing. First Word was also more money than Write but lacked some of the features which I liked.

The major features of Write are its ability to interface with the GDOS (Graphics Device Operating System) program. GDOS allows Write to call up at will, four different fonts: Swiss, Dutch, Typewriter, and the system font; and in several sizes. Therefore, one can mix font sizes in a document for a

very basic desk-top publishing feature. Also available are the standard underline, italic, bold, superscript and subscript features found on most printers; and a non-standard item, outline characters. One can open up to four documents at one time. This feature allows copying of portions of one document to another, by only selecting the passage and then "pasting" that portion to another document. Selecting text is carried out by pointing the mouse cursor and dragging across the text for individual words or characters, by going to the left margin of a document and holding down the left mouse button which selects that entire line, or by holding down Control and the left mouse button with the cursor in the left margin, the entire document is selected. If the cursor is not on the left when Control + LMB are depressed, then only the last sentence are selected.

Selecting text is important because, it is the only way that portions of the entire text file can be modified as to character font, page formatting, indenting of paragraphs, double/single spacing, or making corrections like typos to text. It took me quite a while to discover that fact and many hours of frustration. There is no "type-over" mode, like that found in ST Writer. To make a correction or insertion, select the text being changed and then type the new text. The selected text disappears and the new typing takes its place as you type.

There are many other features

available in Write. There is a Clipboard for frequently used phrases and Glossary for the same general purpose, for example, in the Glossary a return address can be stored and then called up for future use by typing a pre-assigned letter sequence. The Glossary text maintains formatting in any style font and its size. The Glossary entries can be many and are stored on the disk under their own file name. The Clipboard entry, conversely, is a one-item only thing. When one uses the "cut" or "copy" command, the item then becomes the Clipboard entry. When another cut is made, the new one takes the place of the previous entry. The Clipboard item and Glossary items can be pasted anywhere in any document by using the "Paste" command. Footnoting is all but automatic, page numbering can be in several formats from conventional to lower case Roman Numerals, Running Heads/Footers, left and right aligned paragraphs, centered text, mouse selected tabs, "open spacing" for an open line between paragraphs, and well, I could list all of the features, but I do have a space limitation for our newsletter. Two more worth mentioning: the Ruler and the Paragraph symbol. If you want to see the ruler for tab settings or margins, then a control R brings up a ruler at the top of the page. Likewise, if you would like to see where paragraphs end and begin, then control Y brings those out. In addition to the paragraph symbol, a dot is shown where a space bar is put.

There are many printer drivers supplied with the Master Disks, one for

practically every printer and then a few extras. In my case, I am using both a Panasonic KX-P1091 and Star NX-10. There was no driver supplied for the Panasonic printer and there are some subtle differences between the commands for it and total Epson compatibility style printers. There are two drivers for the Star, one for draft mode and one for near letter quality. Once the correct driver for a situation is indicated, then that driver remains the default until it is changed. When printing the larger or smaller than normal fonts or the three non-standard fonts the driver should be one which is a graphics driver. When selecting the driver, there are other choices to be made together with the printer driver: pitch of print for Pica, Elite, compressed, or proportional spacing; the port to which the printer is connected - parallel or serial; and the baud rate at which the printer operates if it is connected to the serial port. Again, once these selections are made, they are 'remembered' from session to session.

In the beginning, I was trying to use Write with a single disk drive and that created some problems for me as I was unaware that when it was time to exit the program, there are some data files written back to the program disk for the next session. I was failing to re-insert the program disk in the drive for that sequence to take place and at the next session, I would not be able to figure out why the defaults wouldn't come up as I had left them. The manual indicates that at the completion of every session, a "clean quit" should be

executed, rather than just turning off the computer. With my frustration of that problem and some others, I decided to purchase a second disk drive for document storage and that solved many problems. The thing about that was that one has to sue the "Select Folder" at the very beginning of the session, as the drive path is not saved as a default for the next session.

There are some features I don't like. If you want to modify the margins from the default, you pull down a menu for the Page Setup and click on the left or right margin selection and type in new measurements (inches, millimeters, or points; by the way, and your choice, too) and when you return to typing text you have a 'Division Line' which is a series of colons the width of the page. Above the division line your document is the defaulted margin settings of one and a quarter inches from left and right. Below the line are the new settings you have made. I have tried numerous times to start a document with one inch margins from the very top of a document but get the division line regardless. When typing before the line, there is a lag between what is typed and when it appears on the screen. Since I use the 'backspace' key a great deal, it is difficult to see a typo as it is made. I also don't like having a specific printer driver for my Panasonic printer. I have spoken to the support group at Atari about future plans for additional drivers and fonts and they assure me that they are in the works. How they will inform me that they are available is another question, because

there was no warranty card or product registration card to be mailed in at the time of purchase, which is another thing I didn't like.

The program was supplied on two disks: one with the GDOS and the other for the main program. It took some doing, on my part, to get a working copy of the program disk because several procedures had to be followed in order to get the full implementation with GDOS. When I converted to a hard disk, those procedures had to be done all over again.

For the most part, I like Microsoft Write. Primarily because, I suppose, I paid hard-earned money for it. The good features, in my opinion, outweigh those that I don't like. One other note, I also have Thunder! and it works well as the accessory Thunder! but not as the stand-alone program. When a file is checked by Thunder! and corrected, then re-saved, Thunder! adds or takes something away from the file which prevents Write from accessing that file again.

If you are thinking about a new word processor, ask your supplier to allow you to see how the program runs, before you buy it; and I recommend a local dealer for such items as opposed to a mail-order house due to the support that dealer can give you with future problems with the program.

Until next time. . .



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Submitted articles are preferred as disk text files, but will be gratefully accepted as hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disk drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling the STATUS BBS at 495-3905. Articles may be submitted at any time, but will probably not make that month's Newsletter if submitted less than one week prior to the first meeting of the month.

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